

TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION



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Summary

CMHS Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention Project

October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2009

The project is housed under the Tohono O'odham Nation Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health.

The project purpose is to educate high risk youth, families, and communities about risk factors that lead to youth suicide, and to reduce risk factors through engagement in activities that lead to healthy lifestyles.

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Tohono O'odham Community Profile

- *Tohono O'odham* means "Desert People". The Tohono O'odham were peaceful farmers and hunters and gatherers, living in extended family groups with well-defined traditions and norms.



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OLD AND NEW TRADITIONS



Old Running
Game



Circle Dancing

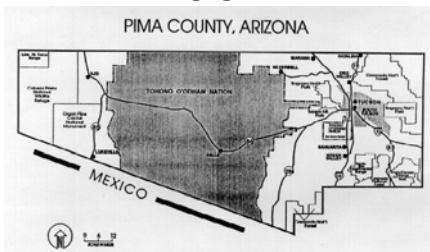
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Tohono O'odham Nation Community Profile

- A sovereign Nation with Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches.
- 11 Political districts with local government structure
- Land base comprising 2.8 million acres of Sonoran Desert; comparable in size to the State of Connecticut
- Nation shares 70 miles of international border with the Republic of Mexico
- Languages spoken are Tohono O'odham, English, and Spanish.

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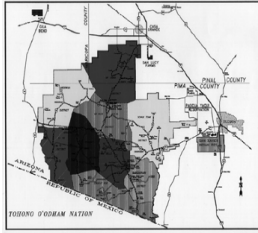
Tohono O'odham Nation: Second largest reservation lands in the U.S.



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Geography and Demographics

- 85 villages scattered across the main reservation, with adjacent sections; San Xavier, San Lucy, Florence Village and San Lucy Farms.
- Total population of 28,000, with 20,000 residing on Nation.
- Capitol located in Sells, Arizona with approximately 2,500 residents.
- No permanent lakes, rivers, or streams
- No public transportation except for health care providers.



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Historical Socio-Economic Conditions

- Increasing imposition of European and Western culture since Spanish invasion.
- Increased cultural trauma resulting from this imposition, including relocation, boarding schools, loss of self-sustaining economy.
- Loss of cultural identity resulting in lack of family and community values guiding behavioral norms.

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Traditional Activities



Traditional Basketmaker,
ca 1918



Picking Sahuaro Fruit

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Current Government Structure: Executive Branch

The Executive Branch includes the elected Chair and Vice Chair, and departments that provide law enforcement, education, natural resources, enrollment, and Health and Human Services programs and services.



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Government Structure: Legislative Branch

- The Tohono O'odham Legislative Council (TOLC) is comprised of a 22 member Council; 2 elected representatives from each of the 11 districts.
- TOLC elects the Chairperson from the council membership.
- Changes to Tribal Code, must have comment period and approval from respective Districts with final approval by the Legislative Council.



Government Structure: Judicial Branch



- The Tribal Court System includes a Children's Program, a Group Home, and a Diversion Program.

- Laws protecting children include Federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1968 and Tribal Laws including Children's Code that ensure that children's rights and welfare are protected.



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DEVELOPMENT OF PREVENTION PLAN

The Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health facilitated the development of a comprehensive Suicide and Substance Abuse Prevention Plan under a mandate from the Nation's Chairwoman after an unprecedented number of youth suicides in 2004-2005.

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PREVENTION PLANNING

- An additional mandate from the Chairwoman was provision of Suicide Prevention training for all employees of the Nation's employees, most of whom are also community members of the Tohono O'odham Nation.
- Following each three-hour training, a community needs assessment was conducted through a small-group discussion and feedback process.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Arthur Wilson, Supervisor
Division of Behavioral Health

Developing stakeholder support
Working with coalitions
Engaging survivors

An organizational and personal perspective



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Linda Fayuant, Prevention Coordinator

- Developing Community Assessment and Evaluation
- Reaching hard to reach youth



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Community Development Process

Jane Latané, Program Development Manager
Management of Health, Dept of Health and Human Services

- **Planning for sustainability**

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TRADITIONS



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